

The next step after the development of a COOP plan is to test the plan to determine where it needs to be enhanced. We have completed many COOP Table Top Exercises for various state agencies.

The following is a list of recurring shortcomings that have been identified through the Table Top Exercise process— along with suggestions on how to address those issues:

- 1) Lack of Redundancy
 - ◆ Ensure the most current paper copy of the COOP is located off site.
 - ◆ Ensure essential individuals have access to the COOP Web-Based version that their level of security requires.
- 2) Plans for satellite offices are not a part of agency COOP.
- 3) Missing Orders of Succession
 - ◆ A clear line of command during crisis must be identified. Depth will depend on size of agency—
 - 5-7 for smaller agency
 - 10-15 for large agency
 - ◆ Make sure position is listed—not individual names.
- 4) Emergency Evacuation/Shelter Plans
 - ◆ Evacuation Plans need to be attached to the COOP.
 - ◆ Transportation of employees from the site of the event should be addressed.
 - ◆ Periodically review/practice/drill these plans.
 - ◆ Include direction that no cell phone usage while in a bomb threat scenario.
- 5) Employee Welfare Team Plans –
The “human factor” must be addressed during times of crisis:
 - ◆ Encourage staff to make personal emergency preparedness plans with their family.
 - ◆ Engage staff in discussions regarding their psychological and emotional support needs.
 - ◆ Coordinate staff and family welfare issues, including health and medical issues.
 - Determine employee’s concerns about safety and security of their family members.
 - Talk with employees to determine what assistance the agency can provide to them and their immediate family members.
 - ◆ Provide employee assistance, including the EAP program for employees and their family members.
 - ◆ Provide benefit assistance to employees and their family members
 - Coordinate the resources internally and with PERS to assist employees and their family members with benefit questions and issues.
 - ◆ Coordinate to provide services such as follow-up medical examinations, mental health counseling, and stress management.
 - ◆ Provide Critical Incident Stress Debriefing intervention, if needed to employees.
- 6) Missing MOU for Alternate Worksite (2nd and 3rd Alternates)
 - ◆ Consider distance from incident
 - ◆ Formal agreement signed by authorities of both agencies
 - ◆ Both agencies should physically view the area being agreed upon
 - ◆ Determine If another agency has priority over your agency for occupancy in case of an emergency
 - ◆ Determine if shift work is necessary to match the space/ equipment/number of employees necessary/available
 - ◆ Determine length time the alternate work site is available (short term – long term)
 - ◆ What is available at the site:
 - Supplies
 - Connectivity (Internet, State Network, Telecommunication, FAX)
 - Furniture (desks, tables, chairs, etc.)
 - Equipment (Computer, Telephone, Fax Machine, Copier)
 - Kitchen, bathrooms, and storage facilities
 - Facility management (janitorial, security, maintenance of equipment, etc.)
 - ◆ Potential for staff to work out of home
 - Connectivity with internet (Web Based programs)
 - Connectivity w/state network (VPN)

- 7) Relocation Tasks
 - ◆ Team must be assigned tasks
 - Transfer Phone/Fax Numbers using ITD Disaster Recovery Notification Form (SFN53607)
 - Mail—Presort, Central Mail (Capitol Building), UPS, FedEx, DHL, etc
 - Procurement—purchase necessary materials (equipment, supplies, etc.) using P-Card limits
- 8) Communications Tasks
 - ◆ Team established with a task list?
 - Media spokes person (combined media release if multiple agencies involved)
 - Means of communication
 - Emergency contact list
 - Customer/Vendor notification
- 9) Protection of essential records (hard copy documents)
 - ◆ If the records are required either by statute or Records Retention Schedule
 - ◆ If a record is lost as a result of this event would it affect your ability to accomplish your functions
 - ◆ Is the record retrievable from another source (is there a backup record)
 - ◆ Should this record be converted to an electronic form
 - ◆ Should this record be stored off-site
- 10) Specific dependencies and their significance to your functions
 - ◆ ITD
 - ◆ Other backup servers
 - ◆ Availability of agency specific equipment
 - ◆ Specific infrastructure requirements
 - ◆ Availability of specific software—can agency perform manual functions until software/network is retrieved
 - ◆ Telecommunications
- 11) Training of staff
 - ◆ Do employees know if or what team they are on and what tasks those teams must complete
 - ◆ Are employees you are relying on to serve on teams committed to other emergency response duties such as volunteer fire or first aid responders, members of National Guard, etc.
- 12) Has the National Incident Management System (NIMS) been incorporated into your COOP? NIMS forms the basis for the current rewrite of State Emergency Operations Plan. It immediately changes the structure for conducting emergency operations not only in North Dakota but all states and territories.